

the needs and demands of the market and to prepare them for the same. The Government of Andhra Pradesh, in the context of revival of Handloom Sector in the State in general and with reference to APCO in particular, had requested NIFT, Hyderabad to study the problems confronted by the handloom and powerloom sectors in the State and indicate the strategy for revival. Accordingly, a comprehensive report has been prepared and submitted to the State Government.

Closure of Powerloom Units in Andhra Pradesh

1177. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey to find out the number of powerloom units which closed in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that many powerloom owners unable to bear the closure of their units and repay their loans committed suicides;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial measures initiated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) and (b) No Sir.

(c) and (d) As per available information, about 30 powerloom weavers of in and around Sircilla division of Karim Nagar District of Andhra Pradesh committed suicide mainly due to the following reasons:—

- (i) High incidence of indebtedness.
- (ii) High power tariff and lack of un-interrupted power supply.
- (iii) Prevalence of disease, and
- (iv) Poor marketability of end products i.e. low quality fabric due to obsolete and low technology looms.

[1st August 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

(c) Discussion have been held with the State Government and action required to be taken for technological upgradation of looms, provision of linkages for yarn procurement, product development and marketing and provision for training & extension support for upgradation has been decided. Action has been initiated to:—

- (i) Supply yarn in Sircilla through NTC as an interim measure;
- (ii) Deputed expert staff from office of Textile Commissioner to Sircilla to begin an Extension Counter to the Powerloom Service Centre in Hyderabad and give demonstration on upgraded looms.
- (iii) Send a Team from the South India Textile Research Association (SITRA) to provide technical assistance to the above Extension Counter.
- (iv) The Powerloom Export Development Council (PDEXCIL) has taken action to enroll members to set up a Powerloom Centre Development Committee (PCDC) in Sircilla.

Alleged sale of *Shahtoosh* by CCIE, Kolkata Branch

1178. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news report in the Times of India dated 25th May, 2001 captioned "it's *Shahtoosh* again and it's official" highlighting that the Central Cottage Industries Emporium, Kolkata Branch, has been making clandestine sale of the banned *Shahtoosh* shawl, made from the wool of the endangered Tibetan antelope "Chikru" by adopting unethical business practices;

(b) if so, the reaction thereto, including the details and *modus operandi* of the reported transactions as handled; and

(c) the details of action taken, if any, against the concerned officials?